

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH April 13, 2010

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice-Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Mary Walsh; Mark Rafanelli, and Robert Bollengier. Member Valerie Zuercher left the meeting early at 7:17 p.m. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar, and Student Member Raymond Moore were present.

ORDER – Chairperson DeSack called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Member Bollengier read the District Mission Statement.

Open Forum – None

Presentation – Student Member Report – Student Member Raymond Moore reported that over the last several weeks, the student body has endured flooding and delays. Seniors are concerned that these events will delay graduation. Students are also concerned about the potential budget cuts that may affect sports and other extracurricular

activities.

RIASC Presentation – Spring Symposia on Education – Tim Duffy – Chair DeSack reported that this item is postponed indefinitely. Mr. Duffy could not attend tonight's meeting and will reschedule as soon as possible.

Sr. High School Presentation – Principal Butler said that this has been one of the most exciting and challenging years of his life. A lot has occurred in one year at the high school. Principal Butler reviewed the results of the Commissioner's Review/Visit, and the NECAP test scores, and gave an outline of the Guidance Report, EWG's Career Tech Outreach application process, and the Response to Intervention (R.T.I.) programs/strategies. He reported that although the NECAP scores are undesirable, he feels they are not so dire that they cannot be repaired. Principal Butler presented slide one of his PowerPoint Presentation outlining the Mean Math/ELA NECAP Scores from 2007 to 2009 and said it is believed that the poor reading scores were because the value setting prompts were not clear to students. The reason there was such a drop in the 2009 scores compared to the first year is that an essay was added to the test, which required students to write a considerable amount and students did not participate for whatever reason. If students had participated, they would have doubled their proficiency scores in reading. The 2007 to 2009 math scores prompt values required students to read questions, which was a different format this year for students. Students had

trouble understanding. If you look at the reading scores, you will see that they are on the cusp of being proficient and proficient with distinction. If students had finished the reading

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and received just two extra points, they would have gone from 30% to 90%. The high school faculty and administrators need to make more incentives to make students more serious about the test. Math Department Chair Karen Purtill and English Department Chair Steve Gardiner gave a breakdown of the test scores for their respective departments and an overview of strategies teachers will use in and out of the classroom to prepare students for NECAP testing going forward. School Committee members expressed concerns that a lot of time will be spent to learn to take the NECAP test, which will take away from valuable learning time in classrooms. Principal Butler told members that he has been told by the RI Department of Education to “teach to the test”. Principal Butler showed the next slide of his presentation and reported that EWG’s SAT reading scores

show how well things are going, and the SAT math scores show that EWG is doing extremely well. Furthermore, the ACT test class average was 24.8 in 2009 compared to the state average of 24.1. Director of Guidance Elaine Joyal-Healy reported that in addition to NECAP, ACT and SAT assessments, EWG is the only public school in RI that administers the PLAN Assessment to all grade nine and ten students, and EWG students have scored above the national level

every year. Other topics presented where ILP/PLP, Fine Arts Honor Society, Duck Stamp Competition, Student Activities – Debate Team and Drama Club, School Improvement Team, and DECA program. Chair DeSack advised Principal Butler that the Senior Project Report presentation will have to be carried over to another meeting agenda. She said that the School Committee had previously requested a redo of Sr. Project and would like to see what changes were/will be made.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda. Dr. Geismar answered Member Bollengier’s clarifying questions regarding item V. B. 1. a.

Member Walsh made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.

The following items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of March 23, 2010

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Donna Botieri as .5 FTE Teacher Assistant – Special Education at Lineham School, Annual Salary \$9,494.00, effective on or about April 26, 2010, contingent upon receipt of a non-disqualifying

Criminal Background Check

- b. Eric McMahon as Assistant Sr. High School Boys' Volleyball Coach, Stipend \$947.85, effective for the 2009-2010 season, contingent upon receipt of a non-disqualifying Criminal Background Check**

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2. Leaves of Absence

3. Resignations – (As Recommended by the Superintendent, with Regret)

- a. Letter of Resignation from Alfred Freniere from his position as Head High School Boys' Track and Field Coach, effective March 17, 2010**

4. Grievances

5. Non-Renewals

6. Recalls

7. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – In the amount of \$200,298.76

D. Home School Approvals

End Consent Agenda

Correspondence – (1) Spring 2010 Art at Metcalf Newsletter; (2) Resolution of the Smithfield School Committee (Contract Continuation) Passed April 5, 2010; (3) EWG Professional Development Day March 19, 2010 K – 6 Agenda; (4) Legislative

Correspondence; (5) March 30, 2010 Letter to all Washington County Reps from Jeffrey Broadhead, Washington County Regional Planning Council; (6) Correspondence Regarding Fund Raising Opportunity

Monthly Budget Projection 2009 – 2010 – In response to Member Bollengier's request for clarification, Chair DeSack asked him to review the single sheet Budget Projection enclosure rather than the Budget Summary Report – Month ending March 2010 enclosure.

Member Zuercher left the meeting at this time, (7:17 p.m.).

Budget Update – 2010 – 2011 – Chair DeSack referenced the April 13, 2010 letter from Attorney Gorham that was handed out this evening by the Superintendent. Attorney Gorham has advised that procedurally it is not necessary for the School Committee to hold another Public Hearing on the proposed budget. Chair DeSack recommended scheduling a Budget Workshop on Monday, April 26, 2010 so that a budget can be brought for adoption at the next regular School Committee meeting of April 27. The taxpayers will then need ten days to submit amendments and the District Financial Meeting continuance can occur mid May. Chair DeSack reported that the teachers' union has agreed to come back to the negotiating table. Members discussed flaws in the voting process that need to change. Chair DeSack advised that the School Committee has four weeks to rework the voting process so it will be different and more defined next time.

Monthly Status Reports – Superintendent – Members did not comment regarding the monthly status reports at this time.

Business

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Special Education

Maintenance

Technology

NEW BUSINESS – Proposed Funding Formula Resolution – Superintendent Geismar referenced the Portsmouth School Committee Resolution packet enclosure and requested that members review it to determine whether the committee wants to send a similar resolution to RIDE.

Member Bollengier made a motion to have the School Committee submit a similar resolution, based on Portsmouth's Resolution, using the model the Superintendent gave us [the School Committee]. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.

Policies – Review and Adoption – Policy # 3201: Annual Budget Process – Amendment – Superintendent Geismar explained that the proposed amendments to Policy 3201 as submitted by the policy

subcommittee are based on recommendations from the Charter Committee. Members debated if amended policies need to follow the usual multiple reading process prior to the School Committee voting. Member Bollengier said his understanding is that amendments to existing policies are not subject to multiple readings. Members briefly discussed language written in bold on page one, “separate meetings” that did not come from the charter review recommendations and determined it to be language from the original policy. Member Rafanelli recommended changing part of the proposed new language on page two pertaining to Working papers and draft budget documents availability from - the school committee shall have available, “to all” to - the school committee shall have available, “for use by” to circumvent driving up copying costs. Member Bollengier explained the intent of the policy subcommittee is to make budget documents available for use at a budget workshop, however, if a copy is desired, an individual would be able to obtain a copy during the business day and would be responsible to pay for copying costs. Consensus of the committee was to modify Policy 3201 as recommended by Member Rafanelli and to strike separate meetings from page one.

Member Walsh made a motion to accept Policy 3201 as amended. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.

Policy # 6201: English Language Learners Staffing Policy – 1st

Reading – Members did not express any comments or concerns regarding policy 6201.

Policy Subcommittee Recommendations – Member Bollengier explained that this is a codification of a review of a number of policies by the policy subcommittee. Before the subcommittee begins its rewrites of these policies, the subcommittee has asked School Committee members to review the policies on these lists and submit any suggestions they

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may have. Member Bollengier requested that the School Committee vote and approve the recommended amendments/deletions.

Member Rafanelli made a motion to address the recommendations of the policies from the policy subcommittee as documented as item 0007, dated 3/13/2010 – Policy subcommittee recommendations to delete and consolidate policies on the attached list. Member Walsh seconded the motion.

Member Rafanelli raised the issue that some of these policies recommended for deletion are good information. He said that he does not want to see the District lose that information. Member Rafanelli asked how the School Committee would address that

concern. Chair DeSack suggested to remove the policies from the policy manual and to keep that information in perhaps a procedural instruction booklet instead. Member Bollengier advised that policy subcommittee member Bill Clay had commented that many of these policies hold nice statements but are not true policies, and they should be taken out of the policy manual and kept elsewhere. Chair DeSack acknowledged that the District will not lose these historical documents and the information will be kept.

Chair DeSack called for a vote on the motion made by Member Rafanelli and seconded by Member Walsh. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.

Flood Update – Superintendent Geismar informed members that he is awaiting a response from the Board of Regents to his request to grant a one-day waiver for seniors as a result of the days missed due to the flood. The law requires seniors to attend a minimum of 171 instructional days of school. If the waiver is not approved, an alternate plan will have to be worked out to allow graduation to take place as scheduled.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – In\$ite Certification – Member Bollengier requested that since this [revised] document is in tonight's supplemental packet and he would like to have the opportunity to review the changes that were made before voting to approve it, this item continue to the next regular meeting agenda. Consensus of the

committee was to vote on this item tonight.

Member Walsh made a motion that the Chairperson approve and sign the InSite Certification report. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 4 – 2 in favor. Member Bollengier and Clerk Coutcher voted no. The motion carried.

Transportation Update – Director of Administration Robert Ross reported he received a call from RIDE statewide out-of-district student transportation inquiring whether the District would save money if it took back 5.5 bus routes from RIDE. Mr. Ross recommended that he look into going forward to get these routes back for next school

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year because it appears that the District could realize a savings of approximately \$38,000. However, he would not recommend consideration for the remainder of this year, [there are less than 30 days of ridership remaining] since although the District would realize a savings of approximately \$7,000.00, the change would mean disruptive services for many families currently transported on the RIDE buses. A discussion ensued pertaining to whether the District is legally obligated to use state transportation for out-of-district students going forward. Mr. Ross reminded members that previously a legislative act passed that school districts had to go

with state transportation for out-of-district students. Districts had the option to choose whether to sign on during Phase I or Phase II. Exeter-West Greenwich opted for Phase I [the current school year] on the premise it would save the District money. In the interim, new legislation has been submitted and voted on that RIDE can relinquish routes. Mr. Ross said he has asked RIDE to submit their rates for 2010 -2011 to determine what cost savings could be realized for next school year.

Member Bollengier requested to revert to item, Monthly Status Reports at this time. In response to his inquiry for clarification regarding Special Education students attending the Coventry Vo-Tech program, which is up dramatically, Director of Special Education Carmella Farrar explained that students with Individual Education Plans have the same access to vocational programs as regular education students. These students opted to enroll in the Vo-Tech program.

Capital Project Update – Superintendent Geismar reported that the permanent water system for Metcalf School will be located where the old tank is today. The project timeline is to have the new system up and running in early August.

Reports/Comments – None

Important Dates and Meetings – Wednesday, April 14, 2010-Building

Committee Meeting; Wednesday, April 21, 2010-Building Committee Meeting; Tuesday, April 27, 2010-School Committee Meeting-(Jr. High Presentation); Wednesday, April 28, 2010-Building Committee Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – None

Adjournment - Member Walsh moved to adjourn. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK